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# Guidelines for environmentally acceptable coastal aquaculture

Aquaculture Department, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

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# Guidelines for environmentally acceptable coastal aquaculture

The ecological and socioeconomic benefits and costs of aquaculture are potentially so significant that action-oriented policies are necessary. In order to ensure that financial gain is not at the expense of the ecosystem or the rest of society, aquaculture developments must follow established principles.

## General principles

- Coastal aquaculture has the potential to produce food and to generate income contributing to social and economic well-being.
- Planned and properly managed aquaculture development is a productive use of the coastal zone if undertaken within the broader framework of integrated coastal zone management according to national goals for sustainable development and in harmony with international obligations.
- The likely effects of coastal aquaculture on the social and ecological environments must be predicted and evaluated, and measures formulated to contain them within acceptable, pre-determined limits.
- Coastal aquaculture must be regulated and monitored to ensure that impacts remain within pre-determined limits and to signal when intervention is necessary.

## Strategies and objectives

- Sound use of the coastal zone to produce aquatic products and generate income.
- Development of policy and management techniques to reduce conflict with other coastal activities.
- Prevention or reduction of adverse impacts of coastal aquaculture on the environment.
- Management and control of aquaculture to ensure that the impacts remain within acceptable limits.
- Reduction of health risks from the consumption of aquaculture products.

These strategies allow equitable balance between those seeking a simple livelihood, those wanting to make a profit, the quality of the environment, and the interests of the local people and the wider community.

## Action plans

- Formulate coastal aquaculture development and management plans.
- Formulate integrated coastal management plans.
- Apply the environmental impact assessment process to all major aquaculture proposals.
- Select suitable sites for coastal aquaculture.
- Improve the management of aquaculture operations.
- Assess the capacity of the ecosystem to sustain aquaculture development.
- Establish guidelines for the use of mangrove wetlands for aquaculture.
- Establish guidelines for the use of bioactive compounds in aquaculture.
- Assess and evaluate the true effects of transfers and introductions of exotic organisms.
- Regulate discharges from land-based aquaculture through the enforcement of effluent standards.
- Establish quality control measures for aquaculture products.
- Increase public awareness of the safety aspects of consuming seafood.
- Apply incentives and deterrents to reduce environmental degradation from aquaculture activities.
- Monitor ecological change.

Source: *Reducing Environmental Impacts of Coastal Aquaculture* Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Pollution (GESAMP). **Reports and Studies No. 47**, FAO, 1991.